ART PASSAGES

Paintings from the Courts of India & Persia

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Indian and SE Asian Art

Paintings from the Courts of India & Persia

Indian Paintings catalogued by

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Designed by Shapour Ghasemi

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Cover page: Equestrian Portrait of Emperor Muhammad Shah, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, ca. 1770

Forward

It is with great pleasure that I present this group of paintings, many of which were produced for the courtly patrons of India and Persia.

Among the Indian paintings of particular note is a group of Devimahatmya paintings from Guler from two distinct series. They exhibit a clean palette, sparse decoration, and finely detailed Devi and her enemies, the demons.

Another group presented in the catalog is a variety of Ragamala paintings from throughout India. Of note are two album folios made at Lucknow for Richard Johnson towards the end of 18th century. They are each signed by artists who worked at the Lucknow court.

Another interesting painting is from the Bikaner court and signed by the artist Qayam. It comes from *Bhagavata Purana* series and it beautifully captures bathing in the Jamuna River by Krishna and the Pandava retinue.

We have included a group of Persian paintings, some of which were produced at the Safavid court in Isfahan during the 17th century. Of particular note is a narrative painting, most likely by the court artist Mu'in or Mu'in ? Mosavvir detailing an episode from the bestowing of power to the Safavid's spiritual leader. Another one is of a standing youth, attributed to another court artist, Muhammad Qasim.

I would like to thank Dr. Robert J. Del Bontà for his excellent research in writing the catalogue entries for the Indian paintings. I would also like to thank Shapour Ghasemi for his beautiful design and layout of this catalogue.

Shawn Ghassemi

1 - Brahma Threatened by the Demons Madhu and Kaitabha

Folio 18v from a *Devimahatmya* manuscript
Rajasthan, Bikaner, 18th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 5 x 9 in, 12.7 x 23 cm

The *Devimahatmya* is divided into a series of stories involving the killing of demons. In this early section of the text the demons are Madhu and Kaitabha. They were born from earwax of Vishnu who sleeps on the serpent in the Sea of Milk between world ages. In this image, they are out to kill Brahma who arose from Vishnu's navel-lotus. To save himself, Brahma praises Devi — the goddess, who in turn arose from Vishnu's eyes. She is called various things, including Yoga-Sleep (*yoganidram*).

The next folio from this manuscript (folio 19) is now in the Norton Simon Museum (P2000.09ab) and has an illustration on each side: Vishnu with one of the demons on the recto and with both demons on the verso. It is illustrated in Pratapaditya Pal, *Painted Poems: Rajput paintings from the Ramesh and Urmil Kapoor Collection*, Pasadena: Norton Simon Museum, 2004, pp. 28-29.

For a discussion of the text and translations in both Italian and English see: Alessandro Passi (ed.), *Devi-Mahatmya: Il ms. 4510 della Biblioteca Civica "Vincenzo Joppi" di Udine*, Udine: Società Indologica "Luigi Pio Tessitori," 2008. This story is told in *adhyaya* I (4), pp. 274-77.

गत्पदर्शीनेत्रस्थो॥ ब्रह्मणोमत्र
जन्मनः॥ ७॥ उत्पपौच जगन्ना
थ॥ स्यामुक्तोजनार्दनः॥ एकार्ण
वेहिशयना॥ ततःसदृशौचतौ॥
॥ मधुकैटभौदुरात्मानौ॥ वतीव
र्यपराक्रमौ॥ क्रोधरक्तेक्षणोहंतु
ब्रह्माणंजनितोद्यमौ॥ ॥ समु।
त्थायततस्ताभ्यां॥ युयुधेभगवा
न्हरिः॥ पंचवर्षसहस्राणि॥ बाहु

ब्रह्माग्रेजा. वा. उमा

राम

2 - The Demon Sugriva meets Ambika (Devi)

From a *Devimahatya* series
Punjab Hills, Guler, ca. 1775
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 7 x 9 in, 18 x 23 cm
Painting 5½ x 7⅝ in, 14 x 19.5 cm

Ambika, the Goddess, is often depicted with multiple arms and in an active stance, but here she is a beautiful woman in human form sitting calmly in a lush landscape. Her beauty is an important element in the telling of the story — after hearing of her great beauty the demon Shumbha covets her and sends the *asura* Sugriva to ask her to come to him. She tells Sugriva that she can only be possessed by someone who can defeat her. Sugriva calls her haughty and returns to Shumbha. Later in the story, the demons will try to abduct her with their armies, however she will destroy them.

The rolling hills and snow-capped peaks conjuring up the Punjab Hills are a common feature in paintings from that region. In designing the plant forms, the artist skillfully shapes the floral sprigs to fill in the rolling hills of the foreground, creating a lovely pattern of tracery and also a smooth transition for the narrative.

The next two catalogue paintings continue the story with the Goddess confronting the two main adversaries, Shumbha and his brother Nishumbha.

A drawing in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, acc. no. 17.2586 offers an identical composition.

For a discussion of the text and translations in both Italian and English see: Alessandro Passi (ed.), *Devi-Mahatmya: Il ms. 4510 della Biblioteca Civica "Vincenzo Joppi" di Udine*, Udine: Società Indologica "Luigi Pio Tessitori," 2008. This story is told in *adhyaya* V (8), pp. 291-97.

देवीपरचक्रछेद
देवीतीरकटे ।

3 - Ambika (Devi) fights Nishumbha

Number 42 from a *Devimahatmya* series
Punjab Hills, Guler, ca. 1780
Ink and opaque watercolor on paper
Folio 7⅞ x 11½ in, 20 x 29 cm
Painting 6½ x 10⅛ in, 16.5 x 25.5 cm

In the *Devimahatmya* the demon Shumbha tries to get the lovely goddess Ambika to become his wife and she challenges him and his brother Nishumbha to war. The demon army confronts her and there are a number of battles. After killing terrible demons in her many forms, here Ambika mounted on her lion is actively fighting powerful Nishumbha. Weapons fly back and forth creating a pattern in the space between the warring figures. Her arrows with their curved heads deflect the more common kind of Nishumbha while she manages to send many discusses, faintly outlined as doughnut shapes, towards her demon foe. Ambika's weapons reflect those of the gods, whose *shaktis* or female powers she embodies. She holds Brahma's *lota* or pot, Vishnu's *gada* and *shankha*, his club and conch, Shiva's *parashu* and *trishula*, axe and trident, as well as a sword and bow and arrow.

For a discussion of the text and translations in both Italian and English see: Alessandro Passi (ed.), *Devi-Mahatmya: Il ms. 4510 della Biblioteca Civica "Vincenzo Joppi" di Udine*, Udine: Società Indologica "Luigi Pio Tessitori," 2008.
The story is told in *Adhyaya* V (12), pp. 306-08.

I thank B.N. Goswamy for informing me that there is an incomplete set of paintings dating from the same period in the Chandigarh Museum, which have similar compositions and uncolored borders. There are also similar drawings in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and other museums in Brooklyn, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles.

4 - Ambika (Devi) Confronts Shumbha

Number 45 from a *Devimahatmya* series
Punjab Hills, Guler, ca. 1780
Ink and opaque watercolor on paper
Folio 7½ x 11½ in, 20 x 29 cm
Painting 6¼ x 10⅝ in, 15.8 x 25.5 cm

Continuing the story of the Goddess' exploits after dispatching Nishumbha, suggested by catalogue number 3, she finally confronts Shumbha. Ambika is the embodiment of the female powers of a large number of gods, a combination essential to kill a series of powerful demons. She becomes the separate female counterparts of these gods and shortly after Nishumbha is killed, all of these manifestations return into the body of the single goddess. Against Shumbha Ambika stands alone. The artist has created a charming device to depict this. Not only does she hold some of the attributes of these gods, but also a few of their heads and hands, which pop up from her shoulders. Observing from left to right, we see the six-headed Karttikeya, the four-headed Brahma, a Shiva covered with light blue-gray ash from the cremation ground and the blue-skinned Vishnu. Between her arms we also find the man-lion Narasimha and the boar Varaha (two of Vishnu's incarnations) on her right and another head and hands (Kali?) to her left. She now can confront the last of her assailants, the all-powerful king of the Daityas Shumbha.

For a discussion of the text and translations in both Italian and English see: Alessandro Passi (ed.), *Devi-Mahatmya: Il ms. 4510 della Biblioteca Civica "Vincenzo Joppi" di Udine*, Udine: Società Indologica "Luigi Pio Tessitori," 2008.
This story of Devi's final fight against Shumbha is told in *Adhyaya* V (13), pp. 309-10.

I thank B.N. Goswamy for informing me that there is an incomplete set of paintings dating from the same period in the Chandigarh Museum, which have similar compositions and uncolored borders. There are also similar drawings in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and other museums in Brooklyn, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles.

5 - The Anxious or Expectant Heroine

Probably from a *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das series
Punjab Hills, Kangra, ca. 1825
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 11¼ x 8⅝ in, 28.5 x 22 cm
Painting 7⅞ x 5¼ in, 20 x 13.5 cm

Inscribed: *Mugdha utka nayika*

The *Nayika* repines on her bed longing for her lover. Much Indian poetry concerns lovers in a wide variety of situations and separation was a very popular theme. The word *mugdha* in the inscriptions at the top of the painting lets us know that this is a young inexperienced or naïve woman. Her *sakhi* or friend listens to her and consoles her. The cool palette effectively conveys the time of day and the severe angle of the bed and the few patches of bright orange add a sense of agitation. The moon bursting over the mountain with a star studded sky and the candles on the terrace giving off fountains of light, suggest that she will stay awake all night longing for her lover. *Nayikas* of the class called *Utka* usually are depicted alone in the forest, but there are other situations where we see these young women anxiously awaiting their lovers at home.

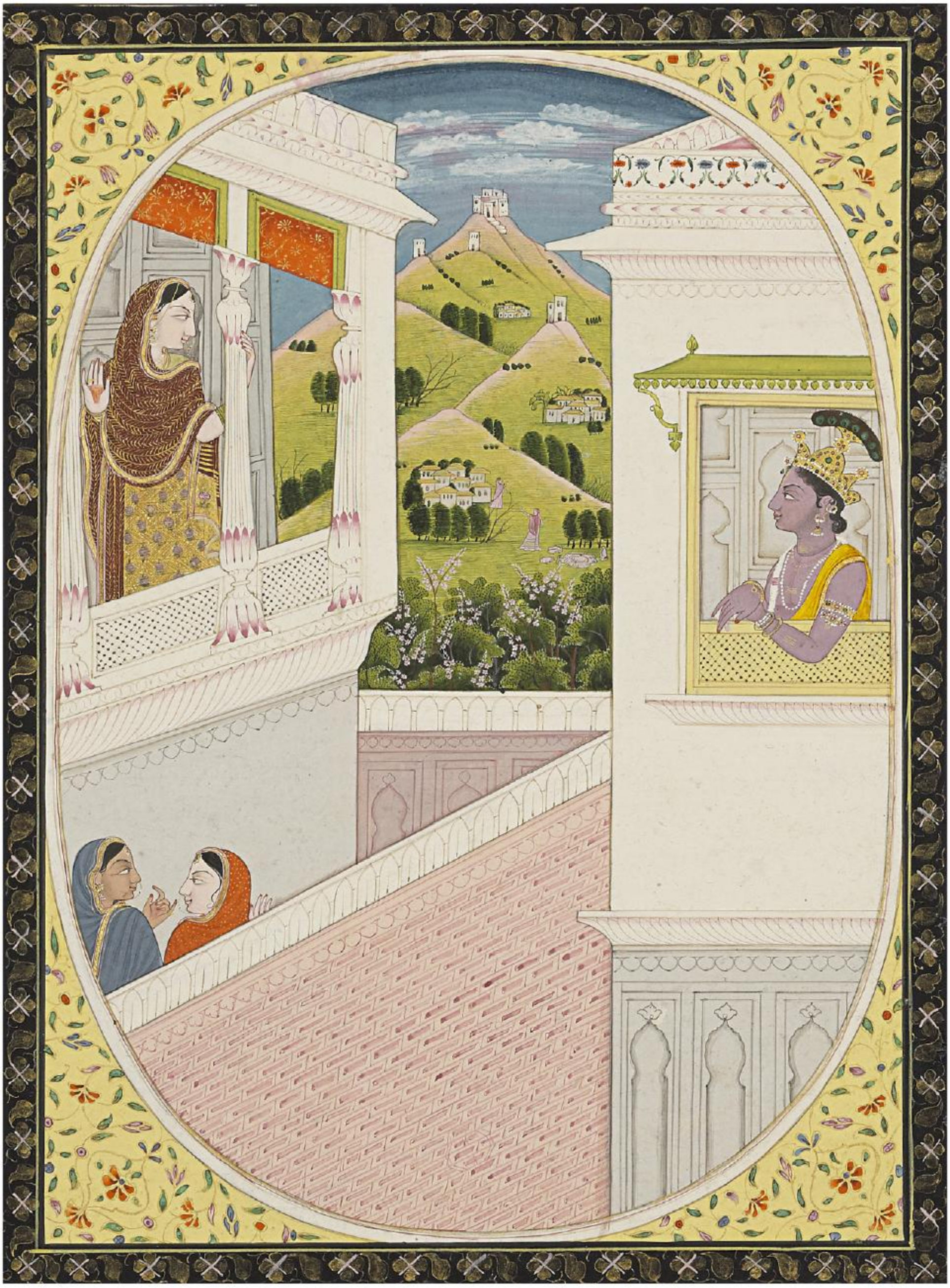
6 - Radha and Krishna Yearning for Each Other

From a *Sat Sai* of Bihari Lal series
Punjab Hills, Kangra, ca. 1790-1800
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 12 x 9½ in, 30 x 24 cm
Painting 8¼ x 6 in, 21 x 15.3 cm

Poems about separation of lovers were quite popular and this separation also is seen in catalogue number 5 — the variations on the theme are endless. A number of very popular sets of poems were illustrated in the Pahari region. An important set organized in this popular oval format illustrating the *Sat Sai* of Bihari Lal is widely published and this composition is included in that group. Here the lovers, represented by Radha and Krishna, are almost united, but the artist has separated them by putting them in adjoining buildings at the edges of the oval. At the bottom center a high wall suggesting the *zenana*, the women's quarters, creates a serious obstacle for their union. Two *sakhis*, friends of Radha, are seen just over the wall and one recites the poem:

> *Looking at each other from their respective attics,*
> *Their constant gaze has, like a rope, tied the house-tops*
> *Upon which their hearts are running to and fro like fearless acrobats.*
>
> from M.S. Randhawa, *Kangra Paintings of the Bihari Sat Sai*,
> New Delhi: National Museum 1966, pl. X, pp. 64-65.

This is far more detailed than the published example in Randhawa's work which is more brightly colored yet starker in appearance. The background between the buildings offers a deep vista with peaked hills populated by small hamlets. It includes a few figures; two women gesture to each other while another figure appears to sit with his cattle. These probably represent Radha and a *sakhi* in the environment of Braj where Krishna and Radha lived with the cow-herders.



7 - Ladies Listening to Music on a Terrace

Rajasthan, Bikaner, ca. 1750
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 11½ x 8⅝ in, 29 x 22 cm
Painting 8¼ x 5⅝ in, 21 x 14.3 cm

Once part of a *muraqqa'* or album, the painting is surrounded by an elaborate border that complements the dominate lilac color of the elegant floral carpet on the terrace. An aristocratic lady sits on a *charpoi* amongst a group of courtesans. Two figures at the foot of the *charpoi* entertain her with music and song. Adding to the immediacy of the moment, one of the ladies, to the right, leans forward and touches the princess' shoulder as if trying to get closer to the music. Another, holding a tame bird, stands next to a marble fountain while an old crone attends in the foreground. The whole is backed by a lush landscape — trees and flowers flank the fountain and expand out into rolling hills. This is topped by heavy gray clouds suggesting the coming of the rains, a time to think of love.

8 - A *Yogini* at her Retreat

Rajasthan, Kishangarh, ca. 1725-50
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Painting 8⅛ x 9⅛ in, 20.5 x 23.5 cm

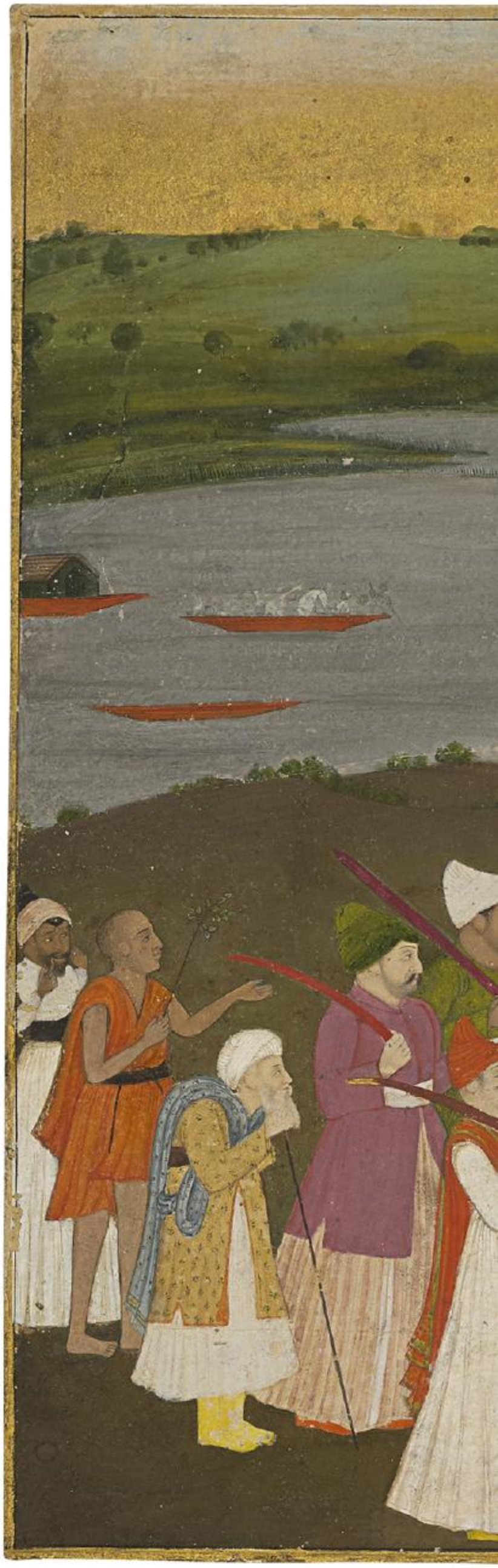
A rather elegantly dressed and bejeweled *yogini* leans on a cord suspended from a tree in a common ascetic pose. She will keep this pose and never lie down for a period of time, perhaps for years, as does the *urdhvabahu yogi* behind her lifting his arm. An *urdhvabahu* is also seen in catalogue number 9. Another *yogi* sits with his legs crossed with a yoga band holding the knees in place; his (or her) blue color suggests that the body is smeared with ash from the cremation grounds. The whole scene has an elegant, almost royal feel to it — the marble terrace fronted by steps, a formal garden and the other trappings, tiger skins and *morchal* or peacock feather fly-whisk. This is no rustic retreat.

The group that has come to visit her are quite varied, consisting of both Hindu and Muslim dignitaries. The stooped Moslem bearded figure leaning on the staff could have come directly out of a Mughal painting. Typical of paintings from Kishangarh, the background consists of a lake with small red boats and a distant flat landscape dotted with trees. The gold sky adds to the sumptuous quality of the whole.

There is a painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (IS.169-1950) painted at Murshidabad from ca. 1765 which may be a copy of this work. It represents a similar composition with the lady on a terrace along with the two other *yogis* and most of the figures below the terrace, but adds other figures on the platform. It is far less sensitively detailed.

An important question to ask is who is this *yogini*? Debra Diamond in her study of paintings done at Bijapur considers questions of whether the *yoginis* depicted there were mortal or actually divine. A similar question can be asked of this Kishangarh example. The court-like trappings may suggest that she is a goddess in her temple attended by her human devotees.

For a recent discussion of *yoginis* see:
Debra Diamond, "Occult Science and Bijapur's Yoginis,"
in *Indian Painting: Themes, History and Interpretations*
[Essays in Honour of B. N. Goswamy], Mahesh Sharma, ed.,
Ahmendabad: Mapin Publishing, 2013, pp 148-59.



9 - Devgandhar *ragini*

From a *Ragamala* series
Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, ca. 1750
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 11⅛ x 8⅛ in, 28.5 x 20.5 cm
Painting 8⅝ x 5¼ in, 22 x 14.7 cm

The iconography of this painting, although un-inscribed, is that of Devgandhar *ragini*. An ascetic *yogi*, in a pose called *urdhvabahu*, sits in front of a cave holding his hands in the air as a popular penance. *Yogis* have been known to hold this pose for years and the limbs atrophy, thereby the ascetic needs to be fed and taken care of. Ladies come to him bringing a baby for his blessing while one attendant stands behind him holding a *morchal*, a peacock feather fly-whisk. Another attendant sits reading a sacred text. The scene with water descending from beneath the figure of the *yogi* conjures up the imagery of Shiva receiving the Ganges River. Other known paintings from this set exhibit similar bright colors, bold lines, and extravagant gold borders with a delicate scroll of foliage.

For Devgandhar *ragini* in the Deccan, see: Klaus Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, Paris and New Delhi, 1973, fig. 295. The elements all match except the upraised arm. Another one with both arms raised and all of the figures, but with a different background is in Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1981, 426, xxxi.

For another later set of *Ragamala* paintings with similar borders, see: Catherine Glynn, Robert Skelton, and Anna Dallapiccola, *Ragamala Paintings from India*, London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2011, nos. 17-21.

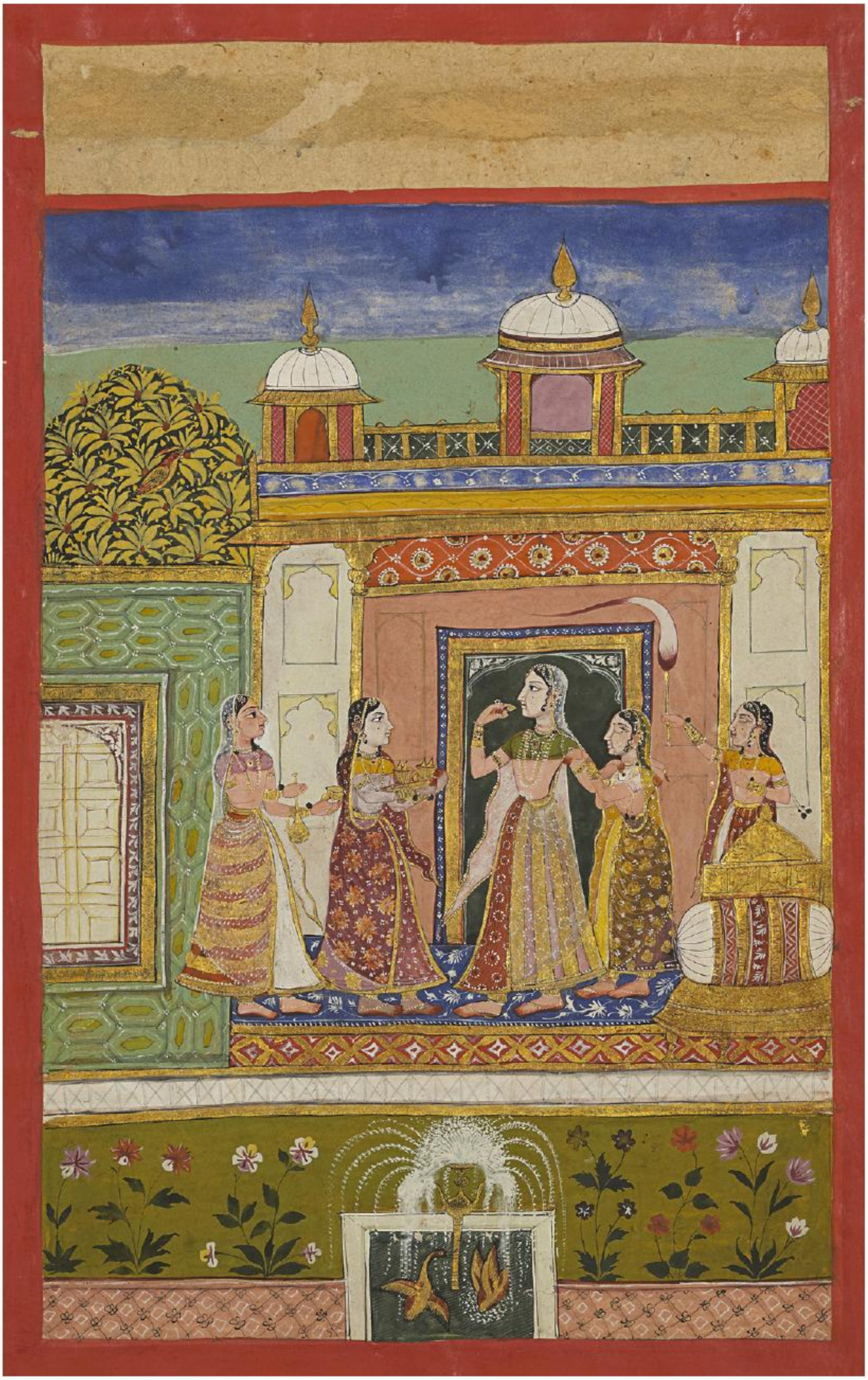
10 - Gauri *ragini*, the Fifth Wife of Dipak *raga*

From a *Ragamala* series
Northern Deccan, ca. 1675
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 13¾ x 9¼ in, 35 x 23.5 cm
Painting 10¼ x 7⅛ in, 26 x 18.2 cm

Inscribed: *Atha Gavari ragani pancam i?stri dipak raga ki...*

This *Ragamala* painting comes from a known set of paintings that numbered far more than the usual thirty-six. Rather than merely consist of six male *ragas*, each with five consorts, the *raginis*, this set included sons and daughter-in-laws of the *ragas* as well. Other paintings from this set and another closely related one are scattered in many museums and private collections. The northern Deccani artist uses bold patterns and colors and juxtaposes them to create a pleasing overall pattern teaming with life. Texts on the back of the painting are in both *nasta'liq* and in *devanagari*. It is identified as Gauri *ragini*, the fifth wife of Dipak, although Gauri is more usually associated with Malkos *raga*. Gauri is depicted a bit larger than her attendants, who bring her delicacies and wine. One holds a *cauri* or yak tail fly-whisk that curves, mimicking the shape of the corner of the door of the palace adding more life to the composition.

Two paintings that are from the same set are in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.74.105.1, Shankarabharana *ragaputra* of Megha *raga*) and the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (B84D12, Malava *ragaputra* of Shri).



11 - Gujari *Ragini*

Probably Gujari *ragini* from a *Ragamala* series
Ascribed in *nasta'liq* to Gopal Singh
Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, ca. 1780
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 12¾ x 9¼ in, 32.5 x 23.5 cm
Painting 7⅝ x 6⅞ in, 19.5 x 17.5 cm

Sitting in a lush forest setting a lady plays a *rudra vina* often referred to as a *bin*, a lute-like instrument with a resonating gourd at either end. Delicately detailed trees encircle her keeping her out of sight except from the vantage point of the viewer. Although the name of the *ragini* and any reference to one does not appear in the unread inscription at the top, it is fair to assume it depicts a *ragini* as the iconography is very common for Gujari. The artist Gopal Singh's name is otherwise unknown.

It is likely that this series of *Ragamala* paintings originates from the same Lucknow studio as the series known as Johnson Album 44 in the collection of the India Office Library and dated to circa 1780-82, see: Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981, cat. no. 351, pp. 173-76.

चिकनेचिहुरचढकीलेचारुपायनिलोंमाजेमखतूलतेंअधिकविकाइहै॥
चंदतेंसरसमुखजोनिजाकीसोहतिहैचंदनकेद्रुमतरेंबैठीसुखदाइहै॥
नवलप्रवीनकरवीनलैवजावतिहैगावनिमधुरसुरमाँवरीमोहाइहै॥
प्यारेरंगलालजूकेप्रेमपगीप्रातवहगूजरीसीदेखियतवनिआवनाइहै॥१

12 - Dipak *Raga*

From a *Ragamala* series
Ascribed in *nasta'liq* to Sital Das
Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, ca. 1780
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 12¼ x 9 in, 32.5 x 23 cm
Painting 7⅞ x 6⅞ in, 20 x 17.5 cm

The iconography of Dipak *raga* is one of the most consistent depictions in *Ragamala* sets — a couple on a terrace or in a room flanked by lit lamps, after all *dipak* means lamp. The couple sits close to each other gazing into each other's eyes. Sital Das has rendered the couples' clothing with great delicacy and the fabric billows convincingly, with subtle shadows outlining the details. The setting is cool with its white marble architecture highlighted with gold details. The couple is placed below a rolled hanging that spans the area between the columns and behind a wide plain terrace along the bottom. This creates a clean and elegant stage, distancing the viewer from the figures.
As is the case with catalogue number 11 from the same set, the title of the *raga* is not in the inscription, but it is safe to present these two paintings as being from a *Ragamala* set.

It is likely that this series of *Ragamala* paintings originates from the same Lucknow studio as the series known as Johnson Album 44 in the collection of the India Office Library and dated to circa 1780-82, which includes works by Sital Das. There are also *Ragamala* folios signed by him previously in the Douce Collection, now held in the Bodleian Library (MS. Douce Or. b.2.f.44 and 45).

For the India Office Library album see: Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981, cat. no. 351, pp. 173-76.

रंभाकेसमानरूपतियकोनतूलैआननागनरकिन्नरकेमोनमेनदेषिए॥
सोरहसिंगारतनचित्रितवसनअंगपहिरअनंगकीतरंगअवरेषिए॥
कंचनकलितमणिजटितपलंगपरकीहेमधुपानमत्तलोचनविशेषिए॥
प्यारेरंगलालजूसोंअंकभरतवहगौरासीविराजमानगौरातांहिलेषिए

13 - Patmanjari *ragini*, Wife of Bairu (Bhairava) *raga*

From a *Ragamala* series
Attributed to Jai Kishan
Rajasthan, Malpura, ca. 1756
Ink, opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper
Folio 15½ x 11½ in, 39 x 29 cm
Painting 11½ x 7¼ in, 29 x 18.5 cm

This painting represents a very distinctive style with its highly decorated surface, the text written in gold and silver against a black background, and its delicate floral border. The group is noted for tall, attenuated and stylized figures, a bright color scheme with sharp contrasts, and fine detailing. The iconography is a bit peculiar for Patmanjari *ragini*. It is usually associated with a much older musical mode called Desvarati or Vairari and depicts a woman stretching her arms upwards in position of yearning for her absent lover. Often the figure is associated with an attendant holding a mirror, but here the *sakhi* or friend of the *ragini* holds a garland.

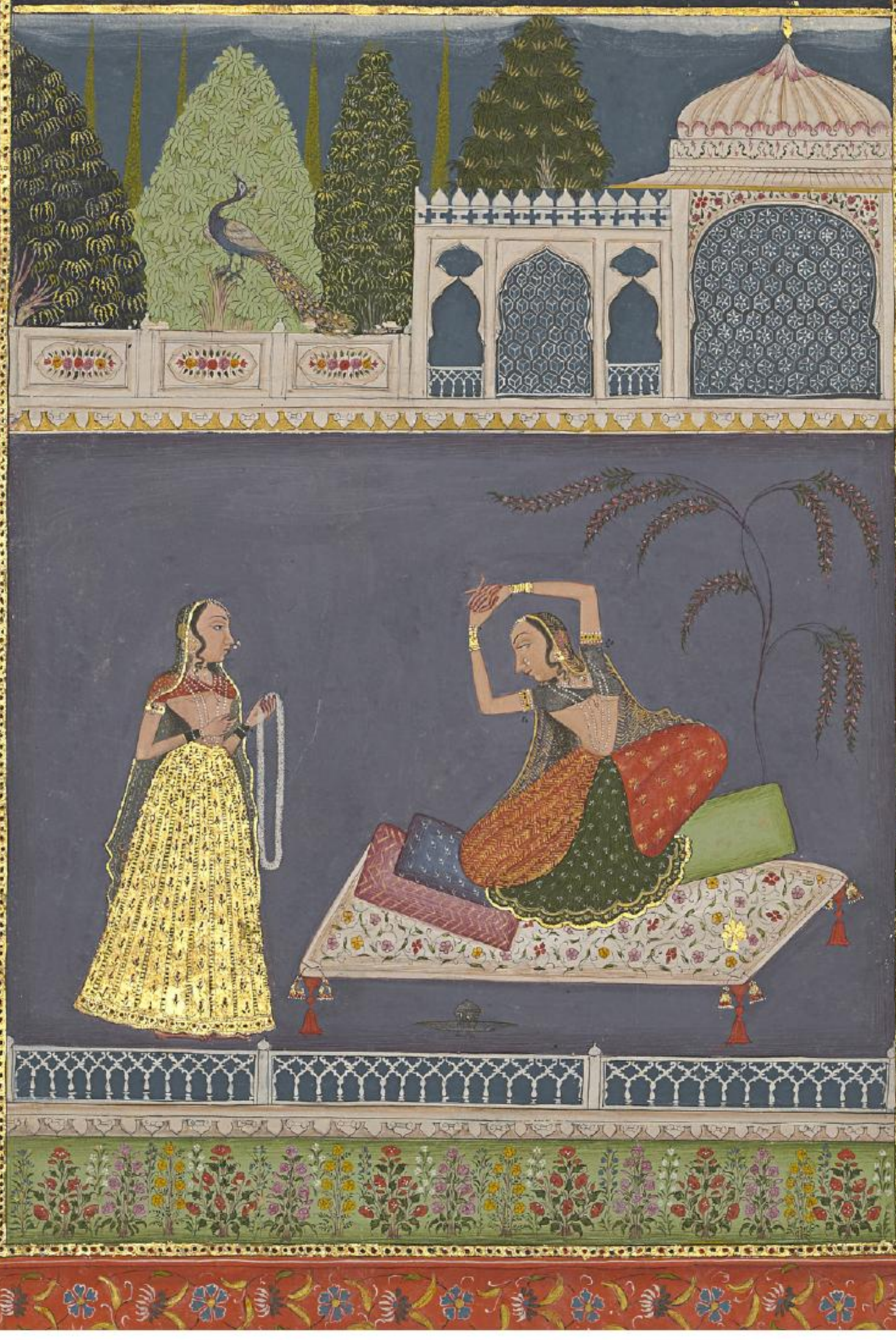
Ebeling briefly discussed the known folios from this set in 1973 and pointed out that one now in San Diego is a bit different — it is numbered and rather than have the text lines alternate colors, the colors alternate according to the verses. This painting matches that organization as do a few others that have since come to light. We can now say that there were actually two *Ragamala* sets made around the same time, since a Dipak *raga* in the Fogg (1963.73) and one in Philadelphia (1994-148-420) display the alternate set-ups with the two colors. The iconography and the text are identical.

The sets are well known with examples in many museums: the San Diego Museum of Art, the Fogg Museum at Harvard, the Victoria and Albert in London, Fondation Custodia in Paris, the Walters Gallery in Baltimore, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and a number of private collections. The illustration of *Asvari ragini* from the series, formerly in the collection of Eric Schroeder of Cambridge, MA, and now in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, bears a colophon with the name of the artist Jai Kishan and the date VS 1813/AD 1756-57.

For a short discussion of the set, see: Klaus Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, Paris and New Delhi, 1973. p. 212,

Provenance: Published in T. Falk & B. Lynch, *Images of India*, Indar Pasricha exhibition catalogue, London 1989, n. 29.
And Sotheby's London, 29-30 April 1992, lot 270.

ग्रथपटमंजरी नेरकी रागनी ॥ फूल को हार स्यंगार सोलागत पीव बिना
नसुहावतु हैं ॥ मत्नीन सिंगार की येतन सुंदरि बिरह की ग्यंचजरावतु हैं ॥
संगिसषी परसंन सुहावत धीरज चीत्तन ग्रावतु हैं ॥ गोबिंद कहै पटमंजरी रा
गनी बृह बियोगक हावतु हैं ॥ ५ ॥



14 - Kakubha *ragini*, Wife of Malkos *raga*

From a *Ragamala* series
Rajasthan, Mewar, ca. 1750
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 13 x 9 in, 33 x 23 cm
Painting 10⅞ x 6¼ in, 27.5 x 17.2 cm

Inscribed: *Kukaba ragani 5 Malkaus ri prarabhatahegayate*.

The iconography of Kakubha *ragini* is fairly standard with the *ragini* accompanied by peacocks and usually holding garlands in both of her hands. In one of the most common systems discussed by Ebeling, she is the fifth wife of Malkos. Usually she is depicted alone, but in this case she is seen with her lover who clasps his arms around her, cupping her breast. The bed that was probably the scene of their recent lovemaking is to the left displays her discarded orange *dupatta* or scarf and bangles along with some *pan* (betel leaf filled with various ingredients like areca nut and spices).

The rich brown color of the carpet and the contrasting juxtaposition of the muted colors are all hallmarks of the Mewar style. The bright orange of her *ghaghra* or skirt focuses the eye on the *ragini* herself. The balance of the peacocks and the *dupatta* to either side of the couple enlivens the composition, as does the clever way the foliage of the trees behind the wall manage to pop through the doorway and over the top.

For Kakubha's association with Malkos, see: Klaus Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, Paris and New Delhi, 1973, Hanuman's System, p. 18.

॥ कुकुभ रागणी ५ मालकोसरी प्रभातेगायजे

15 - Kakubha *ragini*

From a *Ragamala* series
Punjab Hills, Chamba, ca. 1820s
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 11 x 8⅛ in, 28 x 20.5 cm
Painting 6¾ x 6 in, 17.2 x 15.3 cm

Against a plain blue sky, Kakubha sits in a blossoming tree holding a Sarasvati *vina* or lute with two peacocks, essential in the iconography of this *ragini*, at her feet. Thinking of her lover she picks a blossom from one of the branches. A few sprigs of grass stick out from simple blue border below the base of the tree. There is an overall cool simplicity to this painting.

The *Ragamala* series from the Punjab Hills usually follow a system that has a large number of sons associated with the *ragas*. The group of musical modes is referred to as Mesakarna's system and is briefly discussed in catalogue number 16. Kakubha is not found in that system, so this probably comes from one of the more common sets of thirty-six, one where she is associated with Malkos *raga*.

For Kakubha's association with Malkos, see: Klaus Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, Paris and New Delhi, 1973, Hanuman's System, p. 18.

16 - Kaceli *ragini*, the Fifth Wife of Dipak *raga*

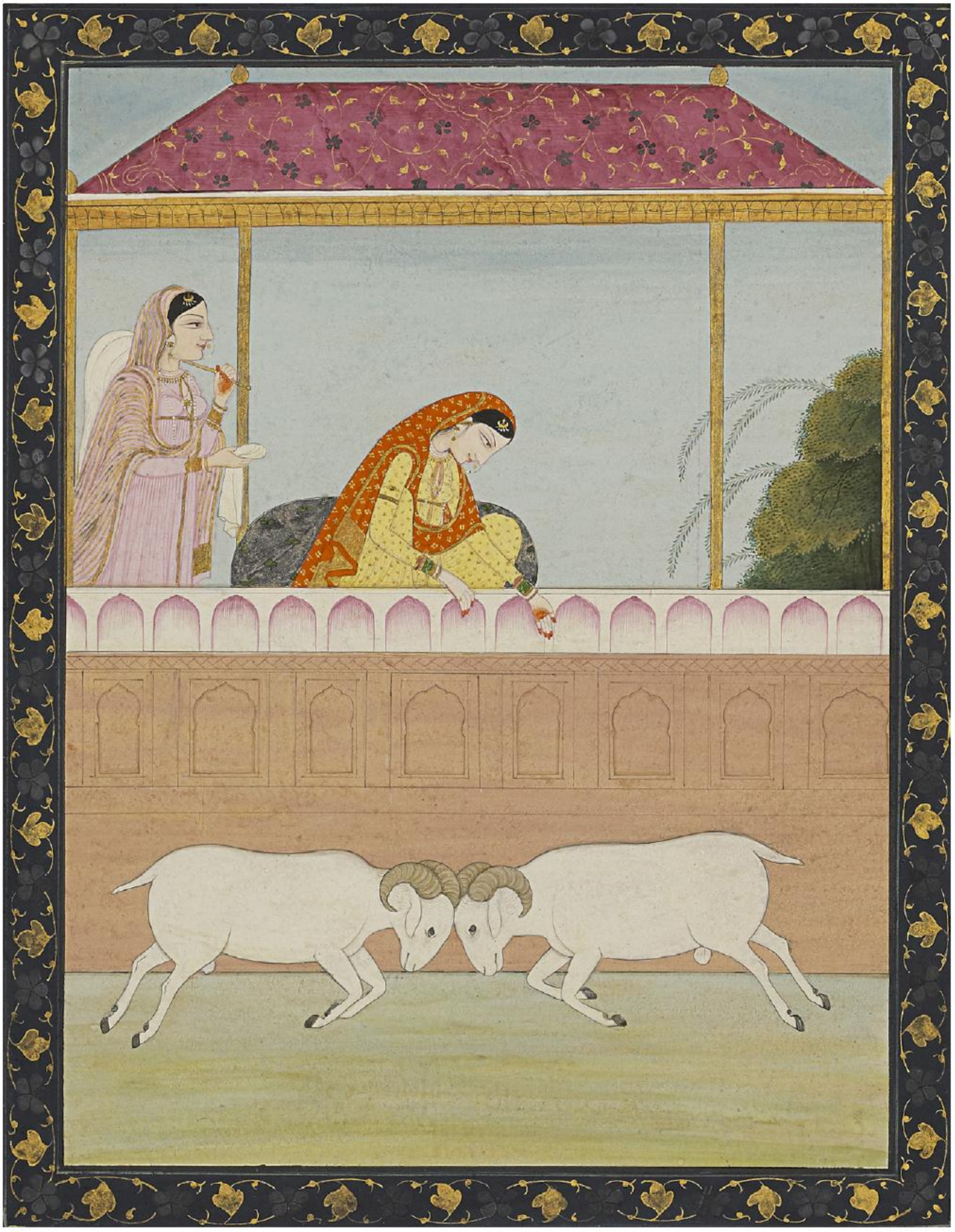
From a *Ragamala* series
Punjab Hills, Kangra, ca. 1820
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 10½ x 8¼ in, 26.5 x 21 cm
Painting 6¾ x 5⅛ in, 17 x 13 cm

Inscribed: *ragani kaceli dipakeda 5*

The *Ragamalas* in the Punjab Hills follow a system named after Mesakarna with an expanded number of subsidiary *raginis* for each of the six ragas. Where other *raginis* in this catalog are also found in the smaller sets, here we find an iconography that seems confined to the Hills. Inscribed as Kaceli, she is also labeled as Kaheli or Kaccheli in Ebeling and she is the fifth wife of Dipak *raga*. The scene depicted here has the elegant *ragini* sitting against a bolster on a terrace looking down at two rams fighting, butting heads. She gestures towards the action. Her attendant stands behind her holding a *cauri* or yak-tail fly-whisk creating an asymmetrical balance in the top half of the painting while the bottom half appears as if mirrored from the center.

For a comparison, see: Klaus Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, Paris and New Delhi, 1973, page 279, figure 324.

Provenance, formally in the Charles F. Ramus Collection.

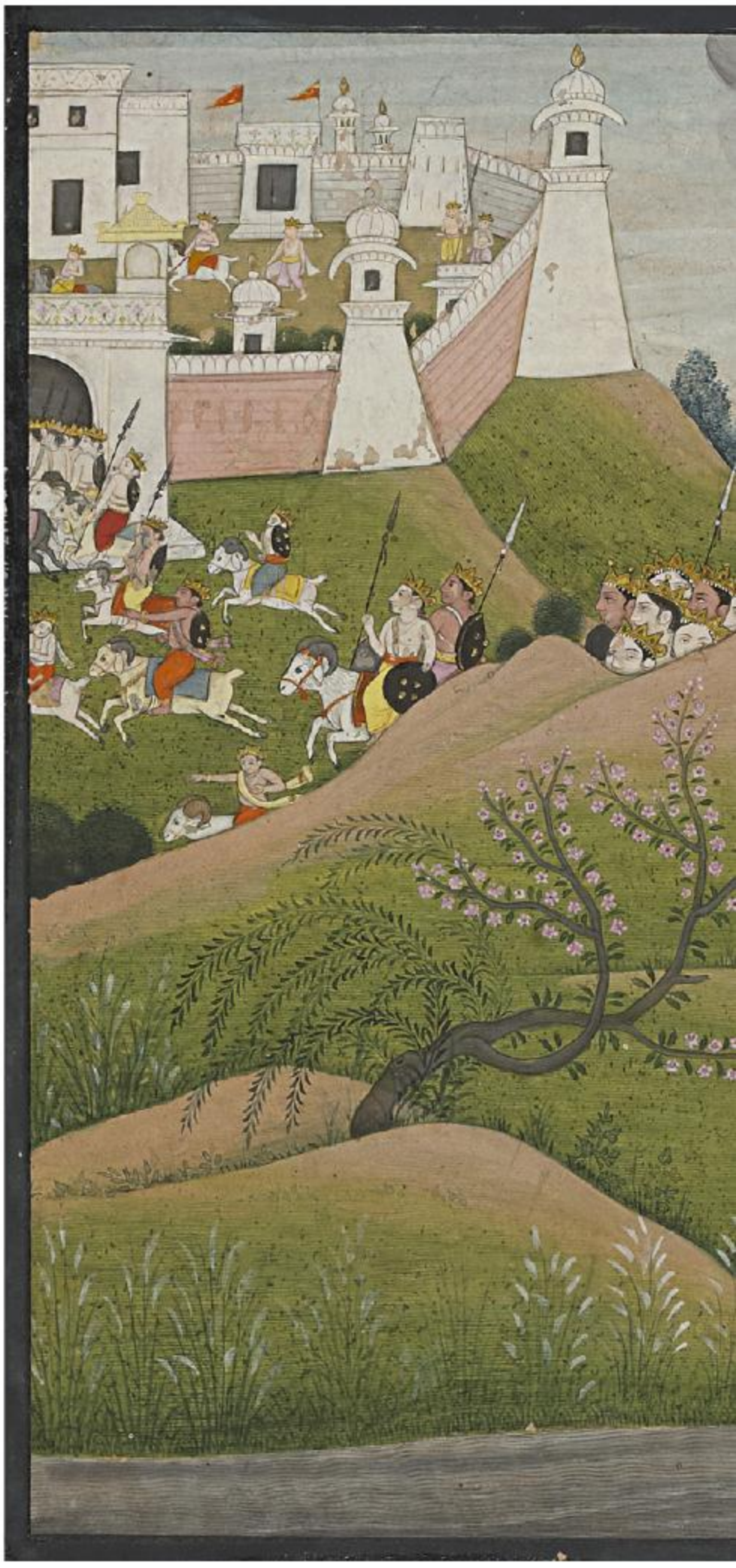


17 - Krishna, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha on Garuda attack Demons

Probably from an *Usha-Aniruddha* series
Hills, Kangra or Guler, ca. 1810
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 7¾ x 10⅞ in, 19.5 x 27.5 cm
Painting 5¾ x 9 in, 14.7 x 23 cm

The precise identification of the actual episode depicted here has been rather elusive; however, it appears to have to do with the defeat of the Usha's father Banasura by Krishna and his son, Pradyumna. In the scene here, Krishna and his son Pradyumna fly through the air astride the impressive, magical bird Garuda. In the story, they should be accompanied by Balarama, but the smaller figure closest to the viewer could suggest Aniruddha, Pradyumna's son who is so important to the story — Banasura is defeated because of his opposition to the marriage of his daughter Usha to Aniruddha. The sage Narada, also important to the story, holds a *vina*, similar to one seen in catalogue number 11, and flies in the sky while the three on Garuda have their bows raised against the demons on the shore. Later there are multiple images of them with their army riding rams and entering the fort.

My thanks to Daniel Ehnbom for first connecting this scene to the Banasura story and to B.N. Goswamy for reinforcing my hunch of a connection with an Usha-Aniruddha narrative.



18 - Shiva and his Family

Punjab Hills, Kangra, ca. 1830
Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper
Folio 10¼ x 11⅝ in, 26 x 29.5 cm
Painting 7⅝ x 9¼ in, 19.5 x 23.5 cm

Shiva's family consisting of him, his wife Parvati (the daughter of the Himalayas) and their sons Karttikeya, who has six heads, and the elephant headed Ganesha populate a number of mythical stories. Karttikeya is seen clinging to Parvati's side with only half of his heads depicted. The rather cheerful Ganesha appears below the pair while Shiva sprawls out under a tree, probably in a drugged stupor. Although bejeweled, Shiva wears no clothing and his pale body is probably smeared with ash from the cremation ground. A pair of snakes manage to instill some modesty to his form. The *vahanas* or mounts of the gods offer some tension to the scene. Parvati's lion appears to be of concern to Nandi, Shiva's bull, who turns back to look at the lion with some apprehension. Karttikeya's peacock is perched in the tree and Ganesha's mouse is staring at the snake around Shiva's neck. While the snake may be an enemy of the mouse, the peacock is probably capable of killing the snake. The rather surreal setting with its striking colors and the angled tree animates the painting.

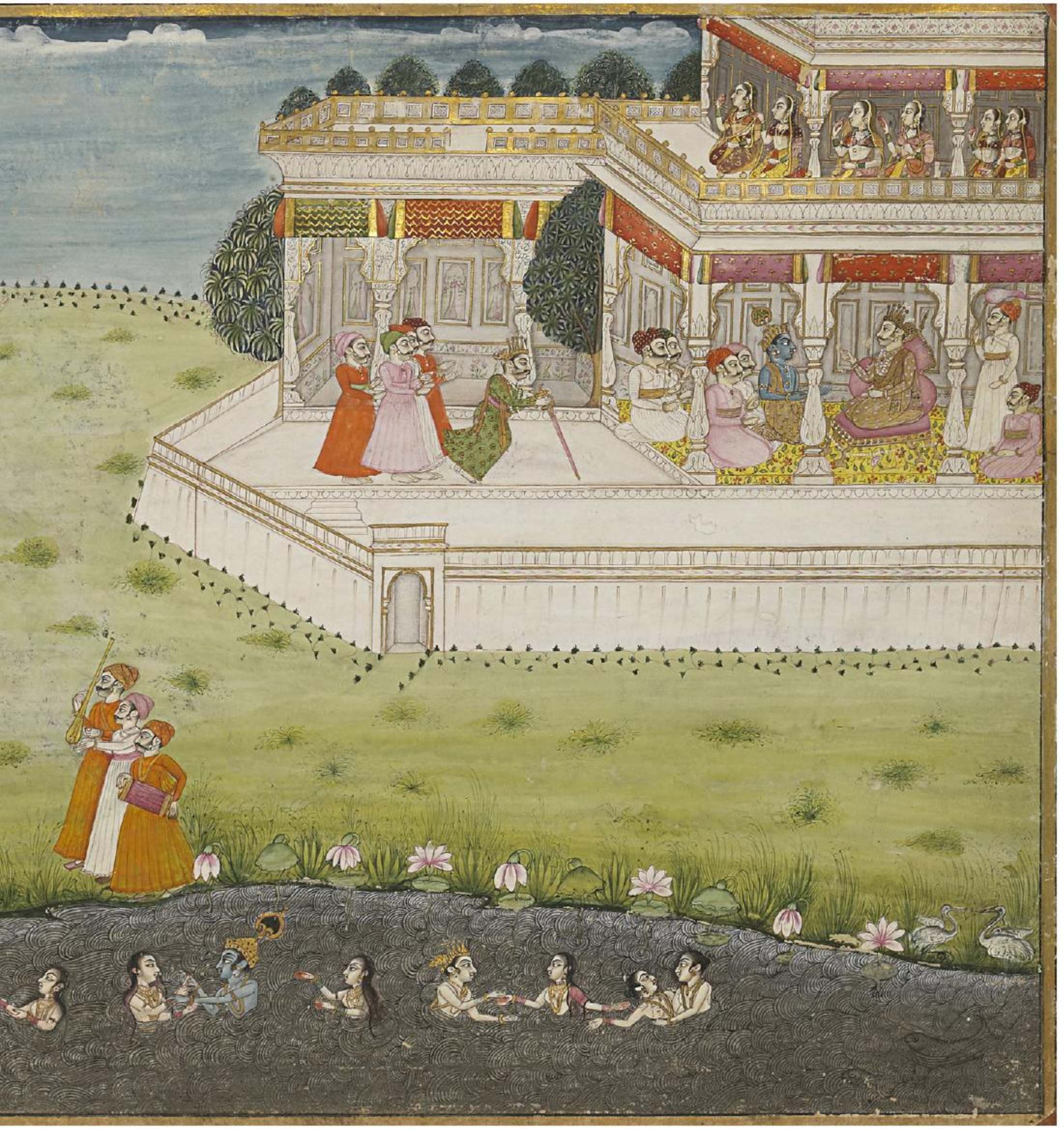
19 - The Pandavas and Krishna Bathe in the Jamuna

From a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* series, scene from Book X chapter 75
Ascribed to Kayam (Qayam)
Rajasthan, Bikaner, ca. 1750
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 11¾ x 14¾ in, 30 x 37.5 cm
Painting 8¾ x 12 in, 22.5 x 30.5 cm

One of the most important moments in the Krishna legend is when he kills Shushupala at a religious ceremony conducted by Yudhisthira, the eldest of the five Pandava brothers. After the ceremony they all bathe in the Jamuna River. We see a series of events in this painting. In the foreground Krishna and the Pandavas with their single joint-wife Draupadi and other women cavort in the river. The artist includes some charming touches with figures disrobing at the water's edge. Musicians play, adding a festival atmosphere to the vignette in the foreground. Later in the story, the Kauravas with their army arrive at the palace to the left. Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, jealous of the splendor of his cousin's palace is tricked by magic. He first thinks the floor is water and lifts his garment. Then what he takes for a door turns into water and he falls in. This scene is depicted on the terrace of the palace while Krishna and Yudhisthira sit in court within.

Naval Krishna has pointed out that there were at least five Qayams in the genealogical tree of the Umrani Usta painters of Bikaner. He refers to this group of folios as from the fourth Bikaneri *Bhagavata Purana* and informed me that there are many folios from this extensive set in the Birla Collection.

I thank Daniel Ehnbom for identifying the scene and Naval Krishna for his thoughts on the artist. For a genealogy of the artists see: Naval Krishna, "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters of Bikaner and Their Genealogy," In: Andrew Topsfield (ed.), *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2000, pp. 57-64.



20 - King Bikram and his son Manhar

From a *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* manuscript
Karnataka, Bidar, 1st quarter of 18th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 8¼ x 4⅜ in, 21 x 11 cm
Painting 7¾ x 3¾ in, 19.5 x 9.5 cm

This painting is from a widely dispersed group that has been on the whole misread over the years. A number of the paintings have short inscriptions that have been associated with Tana Shah, the last king of Golconda. Because of this connection, some have suggested Golconda as their place of origin. They are clearly Deccani in style and another Deccani centre, perhaps Bidar, is plausible as a place of origin. The actual themes of the paintings have been elusive. Peter Blohm's recent article has identified the actual story being told as the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* by the poet Nusrati, which is an allegorical romance about King Bikram and his progress towards enlightenment and the birth of a child to his barren queen. Blohm has suggested that this painting likely depicts King Bikram and his son Manhar. The highly stylized figures, the detailed architecture and vegetation, and light coloration effectively create an impression of cool refinement. Another manuscript of the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq*, a bound text dated to 1743, is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1945-65-22).

My thanks to Peter Blohm for taking a look at the painting and offering his idea as to the theme. For a discussion of the set see: Peter Blohm, "Led up the Garden Path: the Rose Garden Hidden by History," *Marg*, Vol. 63, no. 3 (March 2011), pp. 44-57.

Other folios are in the San Diego Museum of Art, the Foundation Custodia in Paris, Museum Rietberg in Zurich, and private collections.

21 - Shah ‘Alam and Two of his Sons

Mughal, Delhi, ca. late 1680s
Ink and washes of color and gold on paper
Folio 12½ x 9⅝ in, 32 x 24.5 cm
Painting 6½ x 6⅜ in, 16.5 x 16 cm

Three Persian inscription on the back of this sensitive drawing identify the figure as Shah ‘Alam (b. 1643), the son of Aurangzeb, before he became the Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707-12) when he was made governor of Aurangabad and identifies the two figures facing him as two of his sons. The figure behind him is called a much favored servant named Muhammadi. Judging by the beardless appearance of the two boys they are clearly his younger sons, one perhaps Khujista Akhtar the father of Muhammad Shah seen in catalogue number 22. Their appearance gives some sense of the date since his two youngest sons were born in 1673 and 1677, which suggests that this dates from the late 1680s.

22 - Equestrian Portrait of Emperor Muhammad Shah

Attributed here to Mihr Chand
Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, ca. 1770
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 16⅛ x 11¼ in, 41 x 28.5 cm
Painting 12¾ x 9⅜ in, 32.5 x 23.5 cm

Inscribed on reverse: *"Picture of Muhammad Shah Padashah"* in *nasta'liq*.

Curiously for a portrait of an emperor there is a lack of imperial accoutrements and no attendants — just a hint of a halo surrounding his head. Muhammad Shah wears rather simple jewelry, but there is an elaborate hilt to his sword and a jeweled bow with its quiver of arrows pops up from behind the horse's rump. The fabrics are sumptuous and the curve of the horse's neck adds elegance to the static composition. The whole has the look of a frozen moment in time, quite formal in its effect. The low horizon is typical of the period as is the simple treatment of the sky as a fairly solid pale blue with a few dark clouds at the very top. Stylistic elements such as a floral foreground set against a distant vegetal horizon and the dark cloud strips along the top border were commonly utilized by court artist Mihr Chand and his contemporary Bahadur Singh.

This is very similar to a painting now in the British Museum (1920,0917,0.42) but this one is more sensitively drawn — the horse is rather flat in the British Museum painting.

For other equestrian portraits of Muhammad Shah from various points in his life, see: Terrance McInerney, "Mughal Painting during the reign of Muhammad Shah," in *After the Great Mughals*, Barbara Schmitz (ed.), pp. 12-33. He appears alone in figs. 1 and 2 and in more ambitious settings in figs. 11 and 15.

I thank Daniel Ehnbom for suggesting that it is actually by Mihr Chand.

23 - The Veneration of Vishnu

Folio 57 of a *Sarangdharapaddhati* series
Rajasthan, Uadipura, ca. 1690-95
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 11 x 9 ¾ in, 28 x 24.5 cm
Painting 9 ½ x 8 ¼ in, 24 x 21 cm

Vishnu sits on a lotus cushion atop an elaborate jewel-encrusted golden throne amidst all the trappings of royalty. He is surmounted by an gilded umbrella and a spectacular nimbus radiates from the halo behind his head. Two attendants stand to one side holding *cauris* or yak-tail fly-whisks. Five courtiers stand to the left in poses of prayerful adoration with there hands in *namaskara*. They conjure up memories of Mughal figures in formal court scenes. Two others stand below and one appears to be in the act of reciting the poem written above.

The painting is from the *Sarangdharapaddhati* described by Topsfield as a compilation of didactic or descriptive poems taken from poets writing in Sanskrit. These aphorisms cover a wide range of subject matter. Sarangdhara was a bard from Ranthambhore and he compiled this text in 1363. He is also noted for his own compositions, particularly the *Hamir Hath* about the heroic Hamir Dev Chauhan and his fight with the Muslim Sultan of Delhi Ala-ud-din Khilji, a story that has been cherished in Rajasthan for centuries.

For a short discussion of the text and another folio from this dispersed series, see: Andrew Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur*, Zürich: Artibus Asiae Supplementum XLIV, [2001], pp. 98-99. Also see Joachim Bautze, *Lotosmund und Löwenritt*, Stuttgart: Linden Museum, 1991, pp. 197-201, catalogue numbers 84-87.

॥ सर्वज्ञताप्रसंगेन प्रजागरसये ॥ परमात्मनी गोविंदे
सिद्धासिद्धकल्पाकृतः ॥५७॥

24 - The Elephant Bako

Rajasthan, Udaipur, ca. 1760s
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 9½ x 10 in, 24 x 25.5 cm
Painting 8¼ x 8⅝ in, 21 x 22 cm

Inscribed: *hathi Bako // Maharana shri Sa[n]gram Singh ji ri vara ro.*
There are inventory numbers on the back and name of elephant written upside down in red.

The elephant Baku was in the royal stable of the Maharana Sangram Singh II (r. 1710-34) and these well-loved elephants were often painted years later, presumably there were large series of paintings. Portraits of elephants and horses were very popular at Udaipur and many are known. The keeper sits firmly on the back of the lavishly caparisoned Bako and holds an *ankusha* or elephant goad, clearly unnecessary at the moment. The venerable Bako with long decorated tusks calmly walks forward with a contented expression on his face, almost a twinkle in his eye. The simple setting with a few sprigs of vegetation at the bottom and the solid light blue background lets us focus on the rounded volumes of the animal.

॥महाराजाश्री प्रतापसिंघजीरीकारसे हाथी चंचलगज

25 - The Elephant Camcala

Rajasthan, Udaipur, ca. 1760s
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 12⅛ x 17⅜ in, 31 x 44 cm
Painting 10½ x 15¾ in, 26.5 x 40 cm

Inscribed: *Maharana shri Pratap Singh ji ri vara ro hathi Camcalagaja.*
There are inventory numbers on the back and name of elephant written upside down.

Where the elephant Bako in catalogue number 24 calmly walks forward, perhaps Camcala is a bit more threatening. He is not at a run, but the two keepers in front of him seem somewhat apprehensive, perhaps on the look-out for some sort of rampage. He appears to be properly named since Camcala can be translated as energetic. Camcala is not as lavishly dressed as Bako and the heavier chains on all four of his feet suggests he may not have been as tame — he is still young with only a hint of a tusk showing. The keeper on his back is placed well back, not nearly as in control as the one on Bako and his dress is quite informal. In this case, the inscription informs us that the elephant was in the royal stable of the Maharana Pratap Singh II (r. 1751-54).

26 -Men Performing Ablutions in a Hamam (bath house)

From the *'Aja'ib al-Makhluqat* (Wonders of Creation) of Qazvini
Persia, Shiraz, ca. 1580
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 13⅞ x 8¾ in, 35.5 x 22 cm
Painting 7½ x 6⅝ in, 19 x 17 cm

The scene shows a lively group of men and boys bathing. The text tells us this is no ordinary bathhouse, but a special one. It apparently does not need heating nor piped in water for it has an eternal spring that supplies it with hot water.

The whole scene is a sumptuous one divided into multiple subtlety colored registers; each decorated with colorful tiles, or painted with floral designs. Golden and silvery washbowls are scattered on the bath floor. Even the brightly colored *lungis* (wraps) that the men are wearing are hemmed, some even studded with flowers.

The division of the scene into flat two-dimensional regions, each painted with contrasting colors and heavily decorated with ornamental details, was a common feature of the Shirazi School of painting towards end of the 16th century. Further architectural details embellished with colored mosaics, wall paintings, and colorful drapery, all were employed in order to create a dazzling and jewel-like setting pleasuring the viewer.

رفو سیاه مانند قار حمامیست شدید الحراره که نه آتش می افروزند در آن و نه آب میدهند مدمان حمام

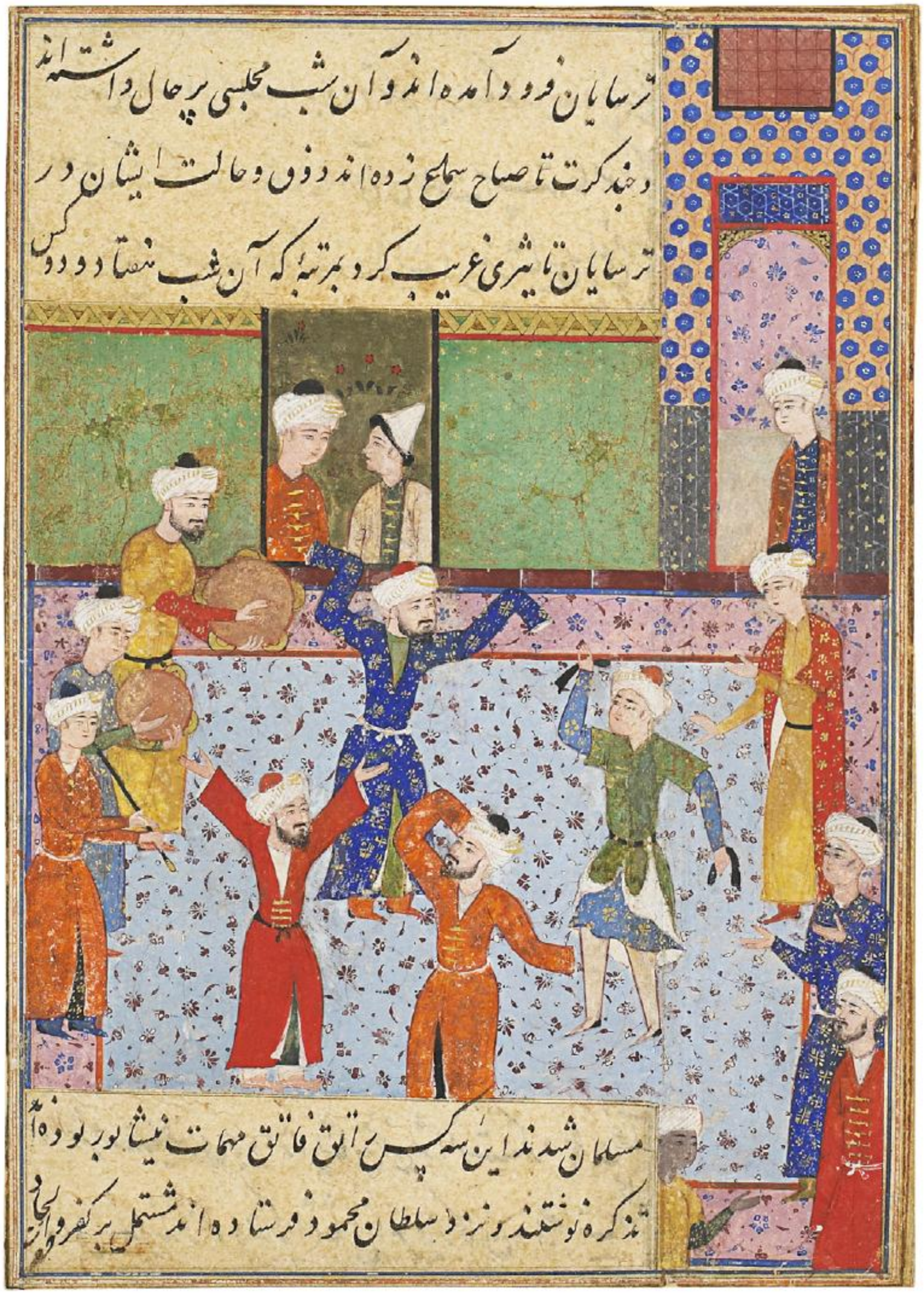
برچشمه حار الماء مبنی بود و مخصص بود مسلمانرا و کفار را در آن دخول مجال نیست هر چند ایالت آن موضع ایشانرا است

27 - Men Dancing in Ecstasy

From a literary work
Persia, Shiraz, ca. 1580
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Painting 7 ⅛ x 5 ⅛ in, 18.2 x 12.8 cm

The scene shows a group of men dancing in ecstasy and they will dance until dawn. The text says it is because seventy-two Christians converted to Islam; hence the joyous celebration.
The dancing men wear colorful *jamas*, which along with the floral rug covering the floor and intricate tiles covering the walls combine to create a visual feast conveying the exuberance of the festivities.

ترسایان فرود آمده اند و آن شب مجلسی پرحال داشته اند
و خند کرت تا صباح سماع زده اند و ذوق و حالت ایشان در
ترسایان تاثیری غریب کرد بمرتبه که آن شب منصف دو دو کس



مسلمان شدند این سه کس را تا ق فا تق مهمات نیشابور بوده است
تذکره نوشتند و نزد سلطان محمود فرستاده اند مشتمل بر کفر و الحاد

28 - Sheik Safi Endorsed by the Elders

From the *Tarikh-i Jahangusha-yi Khaqan Sahibqiran*
(History of Shah Ismail I) of Bijan
Attributed here to Mu'in Musavvir
Persia, Isfahan, ca. 1680
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 14 ⅛ x 9 ¼ in, 36 x 23.5 cm
Painting 9 ½ x 6 in, 24 x 15 cm

This scene depicts Sheik Safi or Safi-ad-din Ardabili (1252–1334), the leader of the Safaviyeh, a Sufi order and the spiritual leader of the Safavids. He is being endorsed by elders while Sheik Zahed, the leader of the Zahediyeh and his father-in-law looks on.
The album, from which this manuscript page comes from, narrates exploits of the first Safavid King, Shah Ismail, often portraying him as a heroic warrior and a divinely inspired ruler.
Other folios from this manuscript are in the David Collection (Inv. no. 28/1986, 84/1980 & 27/1986); Khalili collection; and other institutions.

خود را در و پوشانید و کمر خود را کشوده در کمر او بست و سر بگوش او نهاده پندی چند در گوش او گفت

و مریدان را اشاره کرد بار دیگر جمله برخواستند و در حضور شیخ زاهد تجدید بیعت کردند

روز دیگر شیخ زاهد گیلانی بجوار رحمت آلهی پیوست و حضرت شیخ صفی خود غسل شیخ داد و کفن کرد و بر و نماز گذارد

او را مدفون ساخت و مدت شش سال در سر قبر شیخ زاهد مجاور بود و بعد از آن مرید از او برداشته با فرزندان شیخ مجا

29 - Sultan Sanjar and the Crone

From the *Khamse* (quintet) of Nizami, the *Makhzan al-Asrar* (Treasury of Secrets)
Persia, Isfahan, circa mid 17th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 14 ¾ x 9 in, 37.5 x 23 cm
Painting 6 ⅞ x 5 ⅛ in, 17.5 x 13.7 cm

Sultan Sanjar (r. 1117–57) is out on a hunting expedition when suddenly he is stopped by an old woman. She grasps the hem of his coat to complain of her mistreatment by the sultan's soldiers, but the Seljuq ruler tells her that her complaint is laughable when compared with his many successful conquests. She responds "What good is it to conquer territories if you do not control your soldiers?" Sultan Sanjar and his retinue appear stunned by her remarks with some soldiers turning away in disbelief. The composition is clearly laid out in three planes with the old crone being the obvious focus of attention.

همت چندین نفیس چون عیار
با تو پسین تا چه کند دوق کار
سر که درین خانه نشیبی داد کرد

شمع سپهم دور کن از رامشان
تا نخوری تیر سحرگاهشان
خانه فرد ای خود آباد کرد

در ره کشف ار کشفی کم نهند
راه روانی که ملامک سپند
دست زد و دامن پیغمبر گرفت

شرط جهان بین کرستمکار نیست
دادگری شرط جهاندار نیست
پیر زنی راستی در گرفت

وز تو همه ساله ستم دیده ام
دانستان پیر زن با سلطان سنجر
گدای ملک آزرم تو کم دیده ام

ز دلکدی چند فراوی من
شحنه مست آمده در کوی من

30 - Salim-e Ameri visits Majnun in the Wilderness

From the *Khamse* (quintet) of Nizami, the Layla va Majnun
Persia, Isfahan, ca. mid 17th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Folio 14 ¾ x 9 in, 37.5 x 23 cm
Painting 6 ⅞ x 5 ⅛ in, 17.5 x 13.7 cm

An emaciated Majnun is surrounded by his animals, which have kept him company during his years of isolation. They are in pairs and appear perfectly calm, although they include animals that should be hostile to one another. His uncle, Salim-e Ameri, and other tribesmen have come to see him, perhaps to persuade him to return to his people. While Salim implores his nephew to change his mind, the others turn to each other to discuss the situation. The various zones of the composition with its bold contrast of colors focuses the attention on the foreground where the discourse is taking place, while the rocky background with bears, leopard, and deer underscores the wilderness where Majnun, the "Madman," lives.

گر لاشه خرد من افتد ار پای
ای یار من ار شود دهانی
یار ی فرس تو یا در حای
اقبال تو یا د جاو دانی

هر سر که نشد مطیع رایت
رفتن سلام عامری مدد مجنون
انداخته با د زیر پایت

ز صرف سخن ز لقط چون زر
در رشته خن کشید گوهر

کز بهر کنار جال مجنون
پیری شبره بود حال مجنون
صاحب هنر و جلال زاده
هم خاسته و هم اوفتاده

وز نام سلیم عامری بود
ر چاره گری چو سامری بود
او بر همه ریش مرهم او را
بودی همه ساله در غم او را

31 - Standing Youth in a Landscape

Attributed here to Muhammad Qasim
Persia, Isfahan, ca. 2nd quarter of 17th century
Ink, washes of color, and gold on paper
Folio 13 ¼ x 8 ⅜ in, 34 x 21 cm
Painting 7 ½ x 3 ⅞ in, 19 x 10 cm

A youth, dressed in sumptuous court clothing stands in a rather empty and rocky landscape. He holds the sleeve of his coat under one arm while gazing off into space. A knurly tree perched at the edge of a stream dominates the landscape while another tops a peak in the background. The artist uses dots to fill the empty space between sprigs of flowers to create a dense grass-like impression. Blue cloud-bands against a golden sky add further sumptuousness to this rather austere drawing. Images of standing youths, both male and female, were a popular subject in the Isfahan school during most of the 17th century.

Muhammad Qasim was a contemporary of the better-known court painter, Reza Abbasi. Long thought to be a follower of Reza Abbasi, recent research by Adel Adamova points to Qasim as an innovator with a unique style. An early dated painting by him dated to ca. 1605, at the Met (11.84.14), which displays his mature style of pointillist landscape further supports this argument.

32 - Standing Woman Holding a Wine Bottle and Cup

Ascribed, possibly a later attribution, to Reza Abbasi
Persia, Isfahan, ca. mid 17th century
Ink, washes of color, and gold on paper
Folio 12 ½ x 8 in, 32 x 20.5 cm
Painting 6 ¾ x 4 ⅛ in, 17 x 11 cm

Drawings of curvaceous young women, a favorite theme of Reza Abbasi (1565-1635), were highly popularized by him and his followers during the latter part of Shah Abbas's reign.

Here a young woman is holding a wine flask in one outstretched hand and a cup in another. Her body sways to her left and her head to the right, creating a sinuous, sensuous pose. She is backed by a tree, sketched to fill the background, adding further movement and life to the drawing.

There's a near identical composition in LACMA (M.73.5.14).